



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric
Administration

Pacific Islands Regional Office
Management Review:
Initial Observations and
Hypotheses

December 5, 2014



NOAA FISHERIES
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

PACIFIC ISLANDS REGIONAL OFFICE

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The initial stages of the PIRO management review has been comprised of interviews, a survey, and analysis of each

- **Interviews:**

- From November 11-26, interviews were conducted with the following individuals:

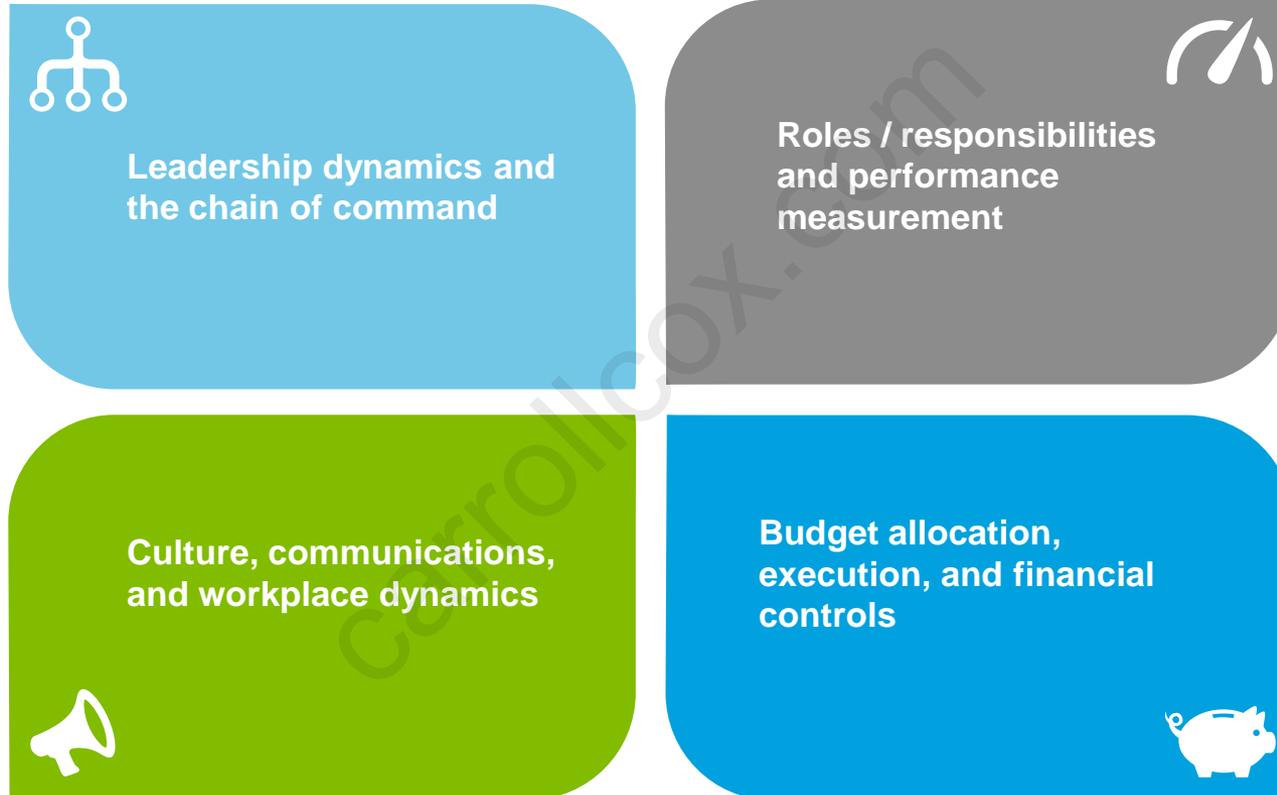
Division	Interviewees
Leadership	Mike Tosatto, Sarah Malloy
DIR	Ryan Kidder, Wende Goo
OMI	Jim Cry, Sandy Tanaka, Patrick Giebler
Mission Areas	John Kelly, Bob Harman, Charles Karnella, Ann Garrett, Gerry Davis

- **Survey:**

- Two surveys distributed: one for all PIRO Federal staff and one for all PIRO contractors
- 93% of respondents across all PIRO partially completed survey
- 76% of respondents across all PIRO completed entire survey, including text responses
- The survey focused on culture, communications, operations, and controls while providing “agree/disagree” questions and free text response options
- Analysis focused on grouping responses into “front office” (DIR and OMI) and “mission areas” (PRD, SFD, IFD, HCD, and OBS) to ensure non-attribution

The following sections provide the team's initial observations and hypotheses based on our analysis

Based on the analysis of interviews and survey results, the project team will focus further on the following areas:

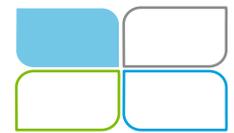


The team's initial hypotheses are interpretations of central issues and identification of improvement opportunities that will guide further examination throughout the duration of the Management Review



Leadership dynamics and the chain of command

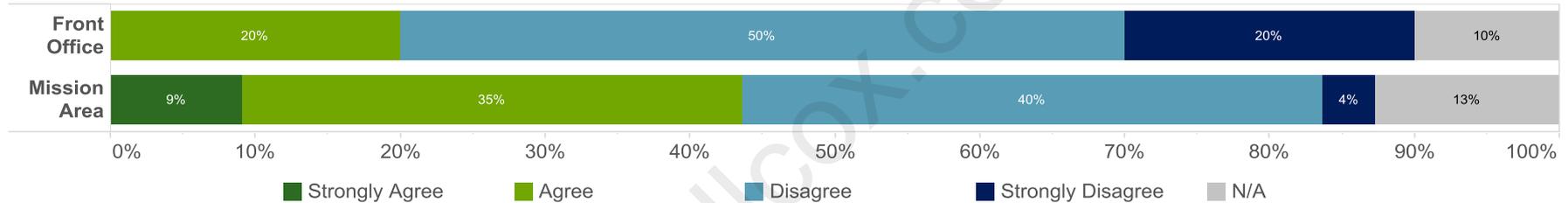
Observation	Example	Hypothesis
There is a perception that the RA's and DRA's role are not clearly differentiated	<i>"There is a blurred line as to where the RA's responsibilities end and DRA's begin"</i>	Improving clarity around leadership roles and responsibilities, the level of OMI's authority, and making an effort to recognize the value produced by all divisions could improve organizational performance and morale
The level of OMI's perceived authority and accountability for business decisions is not clear	<i>"Micromanagement from the OMI division needs to be controlled"</i> <i>"OMI is not a key decisionmaker, but rather an executor of decisions made by PIRO leadership"</i>	
Some respondents have indicated that leadership has shown favoritism to certain divisions and individuals	<i>"Favoritism by executive management towards certain individuals is rampant"</i>	
There is a widespread perception that the chain of command is not consistently followed within PIRO	<i>"The chain of command is often times nonexistent and you just have to 'wing it' in order to not have your day come to a crashing halt"</i>	Understanding where and why breakdowns in the chain of command occur, and finding systematic ways to enforce the chain of command could improve performance and compliance
Examples have been provided where the chain of command has been broken and has put the organization at risk	<i>"Managers and supervisors not following the chain of command is the biggest problem at PIRO"</i>	
Some respondents indicate that they feel management does not relate to them or show concern at an interpersonal level	<i>"Leadership needs to be more concerned with staff"</i> <i>"The X division is treated as second class"</i>	Creating channels for staff to interact with leadership such that staff feel there is more recognition and connection would improve workplace culture
Numerous respondents indicated they feel leadership does not recognize or show they value their work	<i>"Lack of recognition is so poor... [that it] creates tension and hardship in programs"</i>	



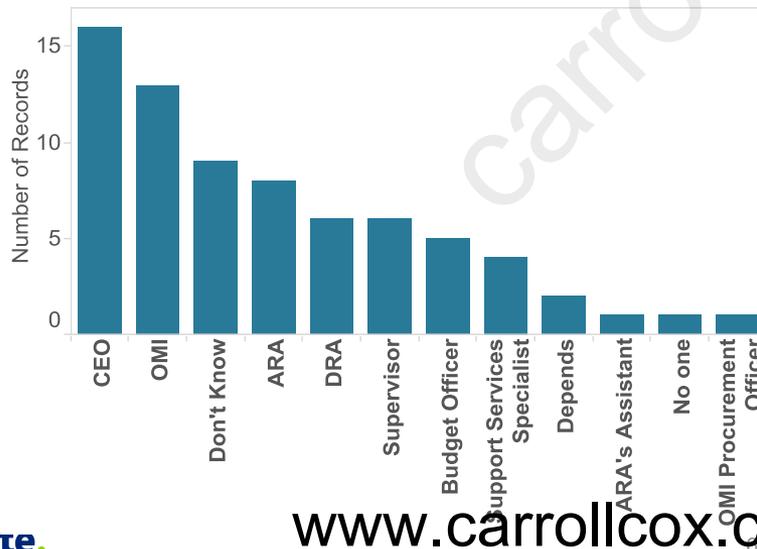
Leadership dynamics and the chain of command

- 51% of all Federal staff at PIRO disagree or strongly disagree with the notion that the chain of command for approvals and reporting is consistently followed
- Staff members more closely involved with approvals and reporting (front office) believe that the chain of command is not followed consistently more strongly than those in mission areas
- Wide distribution of responses to questions asking staff who approves purchase card, travel, procurement, etc. indicates a breakdown in approval procedures and the chain of command

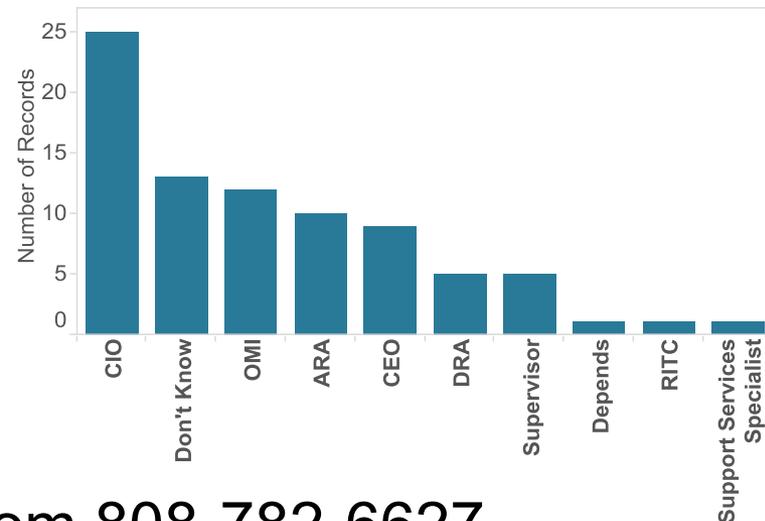
The chain of command for approvals and reporting is consistently adhered to at all levels



Who approves the procurement of services for you?



Who approves the procurement of technology for you?





Roles / responsibilities and performance measurement

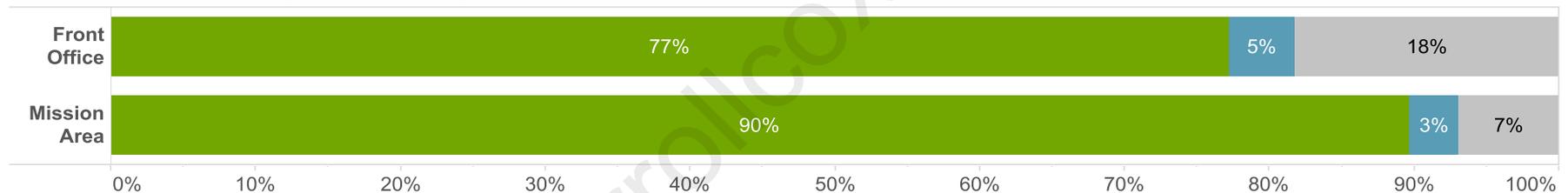
Observation	Example	Hypothesis
A high percentage of respondents indicated that their individual performance metrics are clearly defined and followed	<i>77% of Federal front office and 90% of Federal mission area respondents agreed that performance metrics are clearly defined and followed</i>	Enhancing the current performance measurement system will increase accountability and create a clearer sense of how performance is being measured
However, in free-text responses and interviews, performance management emerged as an area of concern	<i>“Performance management is somewhat of a blanket process and does not necessarily provide needed recognition and feedback”</i>	
While expectations for performance may be perceived as clear, there is a perception that the performance evaluation process is not effective	<i>“Employees are over evaluated and not held accountable”</i> <i>“The process is painful and divisive”</i>	
When asked about a organizational performance metrics, little clarity was provided to show how the organization evaluates its effectiveness	<i>“Our work does not lend well to performance goals”</i>	
Strategic and annual planning is not seen as a standardized effort that incorporates input from all PIRO employees	<i>Only 35% of Federal respondents said that there is a standard process in place for creating strategic plans</i> <i>“Annual planning is accomplished primarily by our supervisors, but this information is not always shared with the employees”</i>	Seeking divisions' input, increasing transparency , and standardizing the strategic and annual planning process may increase buy-in of strategic planning goals throughout PIRO
A number of contractor respondents indicated that they felt it was difficult to get a regular assessment of how well they are performing	<i>“As a contractor... I don't ever get a performance review. I don't get feedback, positively or negatively, about the work I do.”</i>	Clarifying the feedback process and increasing inclusion for contractors could increase their sense of purpose in PIRO
A number of contractors indicated that they feel systematically excluded from areas they perceive to be relevant to their work	<i>“Contractors are left out”</i> <i>“[Exclusion] creates a culture of resentment”</i>	



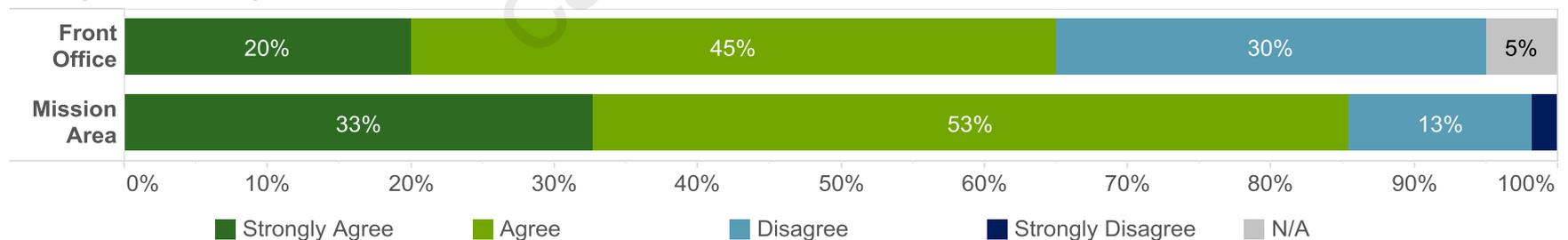
Roles / responsibilities and performance measurement

- Survey responses regarding roles and responsibilities and performance metrics are misaligned with open-ended and interview responses
 - Survey indicates that performance metrics are overwhelmingly clearly defined and followed and that roles and responsibilities are clearly understood
 - Open-ended responses suggest dissatisfaction with performance evaluation system and a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities
- Front office staff are less certain about performance metrics and roles and responsibilities than staff in mission areas, suggesting a need for more clearly defined roles and responsibilities for admin functions

Performance metrics for my position are clearly defined and followed



I clearly understand my roles and responsibilities and for what I am accountable





Culture, communications, and workplace dynamics

Observation	Example	Hypothesis
Employees are generally passionate and enthusiastic about the type of work they do and the people with whom they closely work	<i>"I wouldn't leave because I love working with my Division"</i>	Increasing a sense of community and connection across all of PIRO may improve morale and increase staff retention
A number of respondents stated that they believe the current direction of PIRO is improving	<i>"We have come out of the 'dark ages'"</i> <i>"PIRO is about three-fourths of the way along to meeting its goals"</i>	
A number of respondents indicated they would leave PIRO permanently if provided the opportunity	<i>70% of Federal front office and 53% of Federal mission area respondents said they would leave PIRO permanently if provided the opportunity</i>	
Policies appear to be mandated by the front office with little input or communication from other divisions	<i>"If they had sat down with the divisions and discussed the policy before attempting to enforce it, they would have been able to come to a more fair and reasonable policy"</i>	Focusing on building communications processes that allow for sharing input in policies, procedures, and other aspects relevant to work may increase engagement
Not all communication channels are used optimally	<i>Only 35% of Federal respondents agreed that newsletters are used effectively</i> <i>"I think the last All-Hands was almost a year ago"</i>	
There is a perception that the front office can get too far in the weeds at the expense of overall vision for the organization	<i>"Issues arise as [the front office] is too busy getting into weeds as opposed to setting overall direction"</i>	
Respondents indicated that divisions do good work in their respective areas, but they don't necessarily communicate well with each other	<i>"Division chiefs see themselves as leaders of their division, but should also see themselves as members on the PIRO board of directors"</i>	Increased cross-divisional communication and collaboration may improve workplace culture and effectiveness
Respondents indicated that while they feel a sense of community within their own Division, they feel less of a sense of community within broader PIRO	<i>50% of Federal front office respondents and 50% of Federal mission area respondents agreed that they feel a sense of community and inclusion within PIRO as a whole</i>	

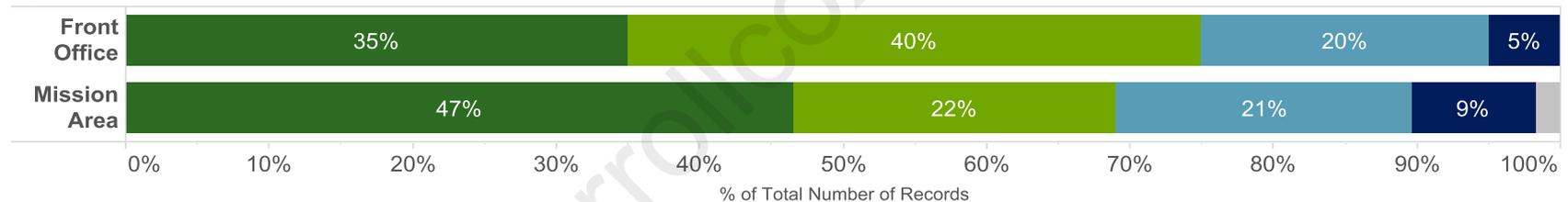


Culture, communications, and workplace dynamics

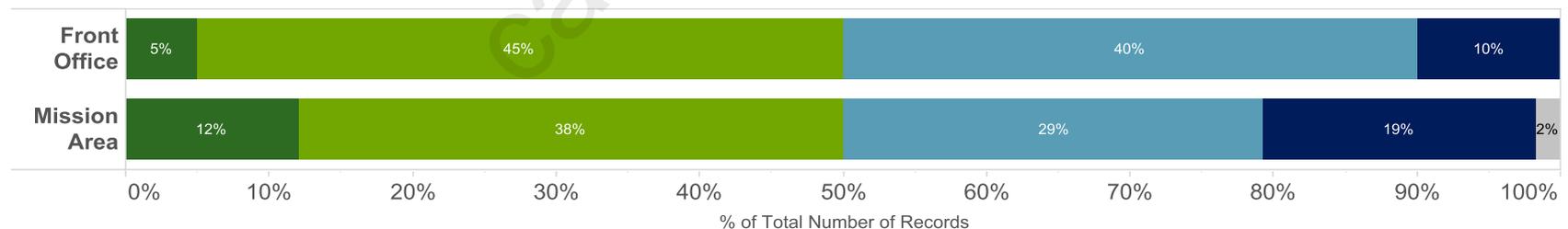
- Employees feel much more strongly included within their division than they do within PIRO as a whole, suggesting a need for more effective cross-divisional communication and collaboration
- Employees strongly agree with the notion that employees within their division communicate and collaborate effectively with each other, but they feel much less strongly about cross-divisional collaboration throughout PIRO (see Appendix)
- 62% of contractors agree with the notion that culture at PIRO encourages and enhances their work, while 37% of contractors disagree or strongly disagree with the idea

I feel a strong sense of community and inclusion within:

my Division



PIRO



Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A



Budget allocation, execution, and financial controls

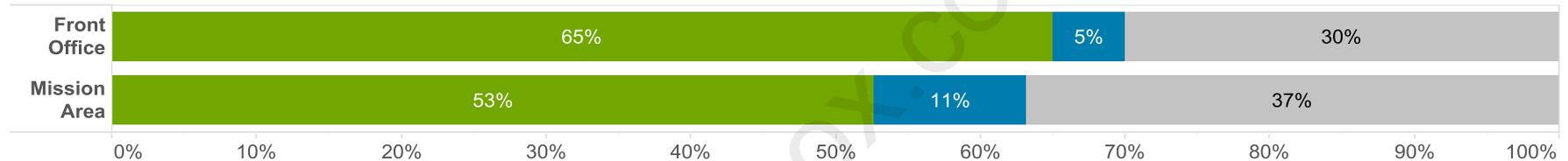
Observation	Example	Hypothesis
A number of respondents indicated that they feel budgeting decisions are made secretively and lack transparency	<i>“There is not enough transparency... The majority of decisions are secretive”</i>	Incentivizing more engagement , systematic opportunities for providing input, and increasing level of knowledge and awareness in the budgeting process will create a sense of responsibility and empowerment within PIRO
Employees are often unclear on the rationale for key budgeting decisions	<i>“Staff should get a clearer idea on how the budget works”</i>	
The quantity of N/A responses around budgeting was higher than average, implying a lack of understanding and involvement in budget decisions	<i>“My performance plan includes budget execution, but I am not involved”</i>	
Respondents indicated that budget execution is not performed properly at times and has negative ramifications on the organization	<i>“Funds are not executed properly and money is returned at the end of year”</i>	Improving financial and budget-related controls will increase the effectiveness of how PIRO’s monetary resources are utilized
Respondents indicated that at times procurements are handled improperly or without sufficient clarity	<i>“Budget and procurement processes are convoluted”</i> <i>“I have received misrouted procurement packages”</i>	



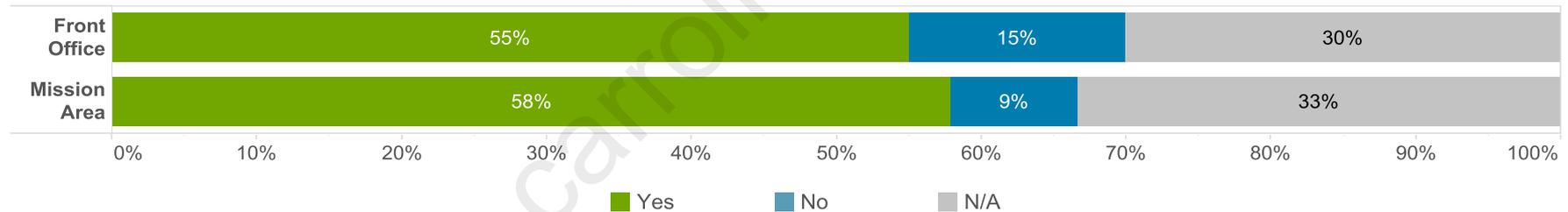
Budget allocation, execution, and financial controls

- While it appears as though there are standard processes and procedures in place for budget formulation and execution, about one-third of Federal staff at PIRO feel uninformed
- Survey responses are relatively aligned with the notion that budgetary processes are conducted secretly and lack transparency

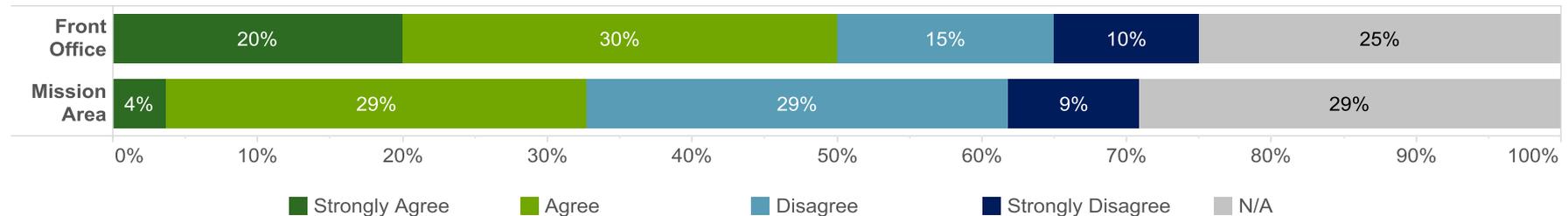
There are standard processes and procedures in place for budget formulation



There are standard processes and procedures in place for budget execution



Budgetary processes and decisions are conducted in a fair and transparent manner



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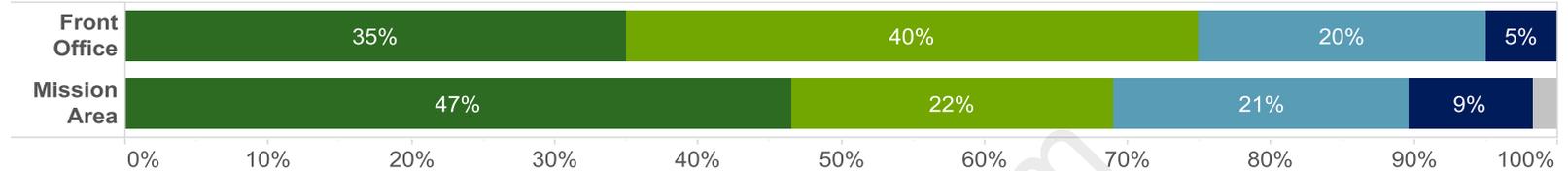
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Appendix: Survey Results

Staff feel more inclusion within their divisions than they do within PIRO, NMFS, and NOAA

I feel a strong sense of community and inclusion within:

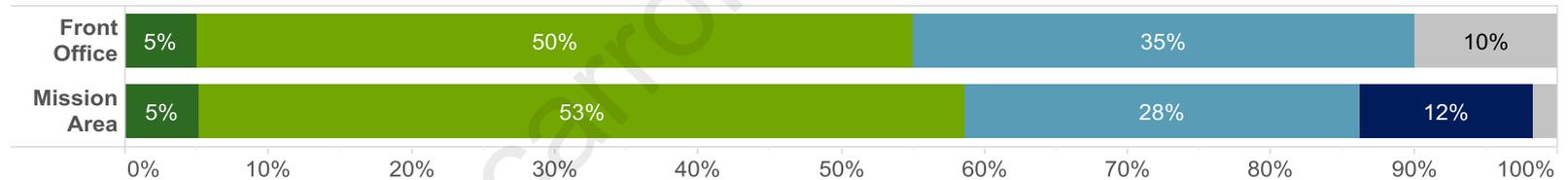
my Division



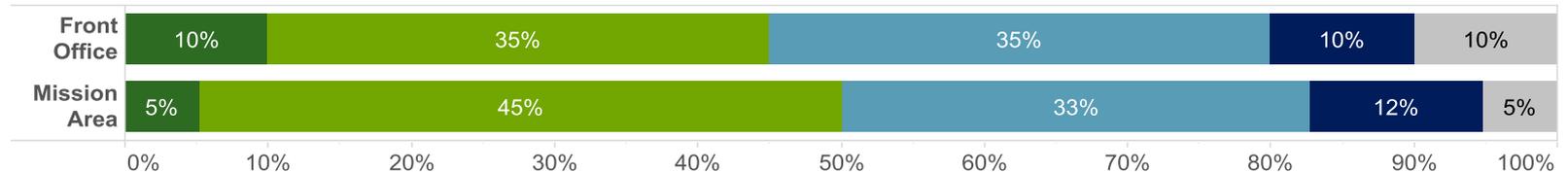
PIRO



NMFS



NOAA

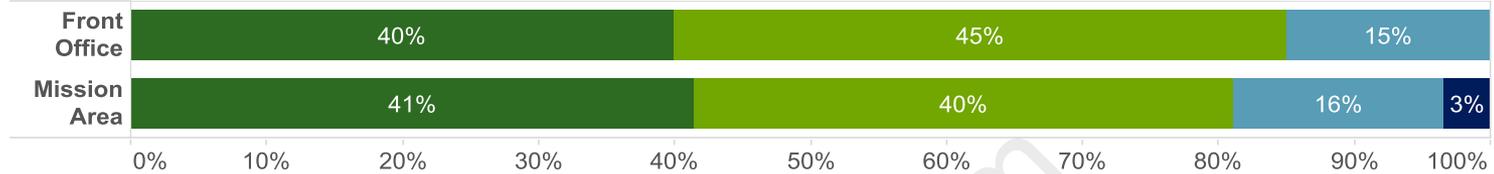


■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ N/A

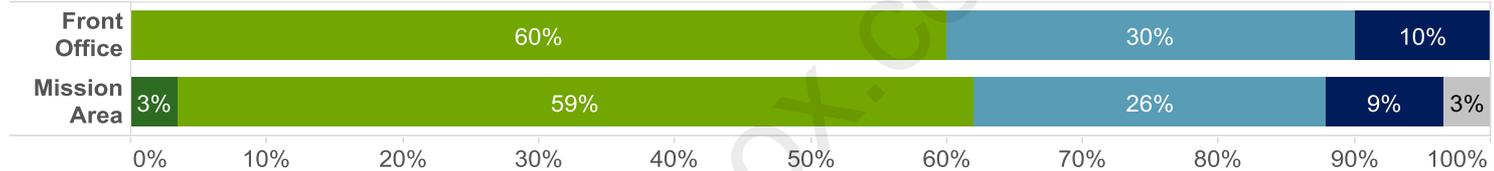
Staff at PIRO collaborate more effectively within their divisions and with external customers than they do with other divisions within PIRO

Employees in my division collaborate effectively with:

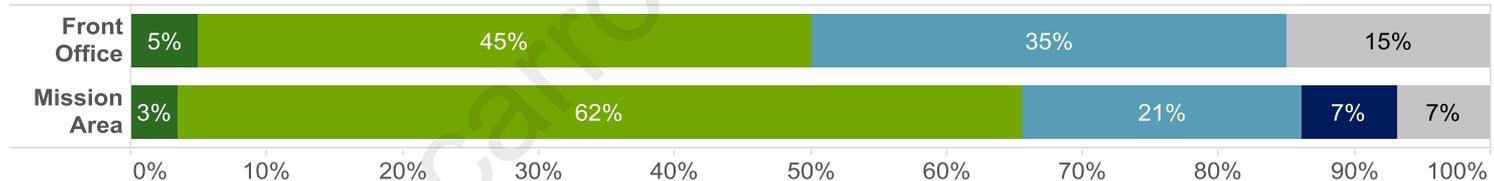
other employees in my Division



other PIRO Divisions



other NMFS offices



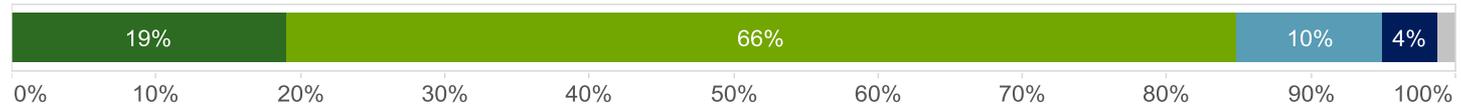
external stakeholders and customers



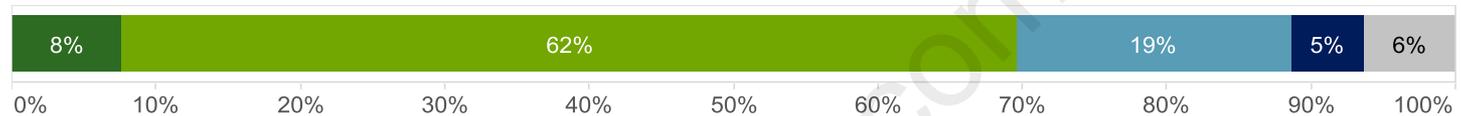
Not all communication channels are being used effectively at PIRO

The following channels of communication are used appropriately at PIRO:

Emails



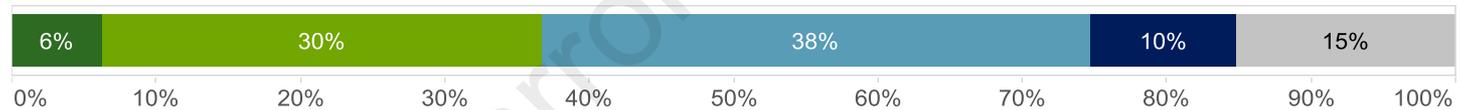
Meetings



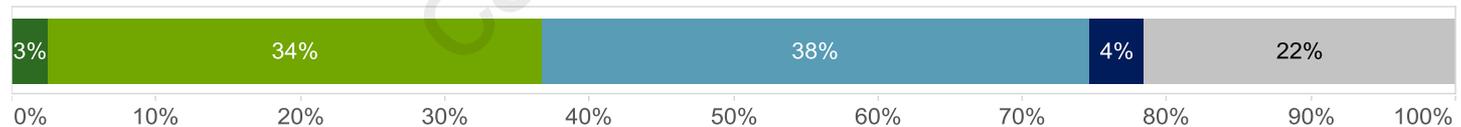
All-Hands Meetings and Community Events



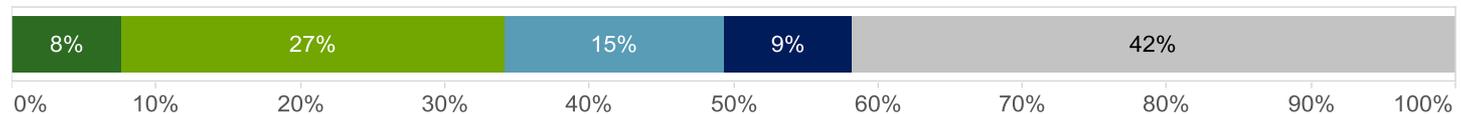
Word of Mouth



Common Spaces



Newsletters



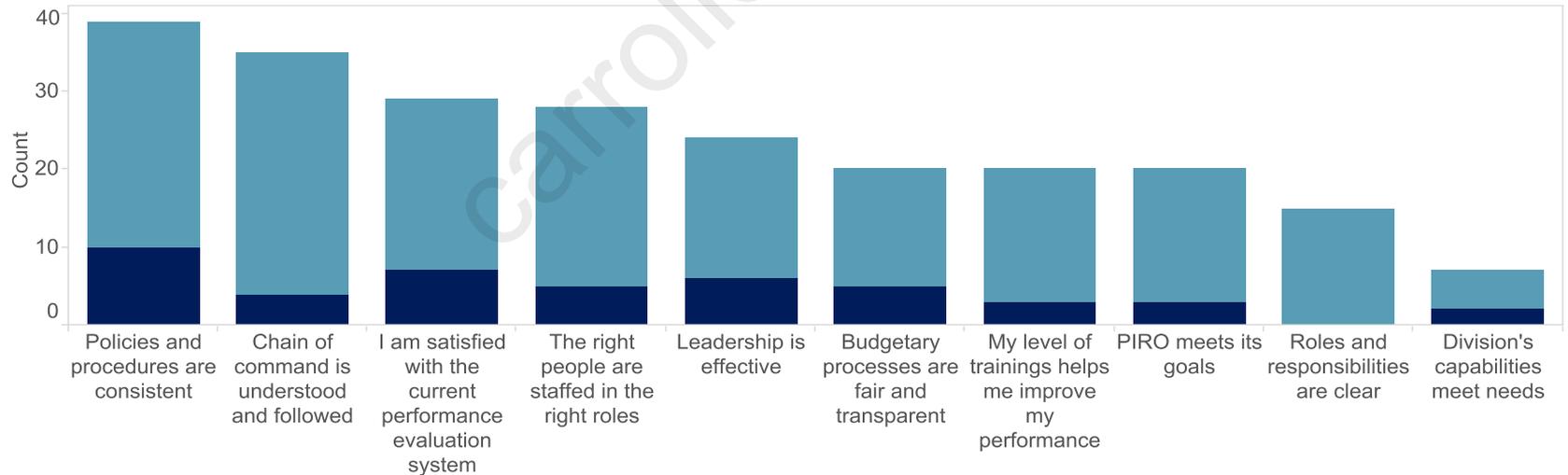
■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ N/A

Staff at PIRO believe their divisions perform well but there is a lack of consistency in office-wide procedures and in the chain of command

Areas sorted by satisfaction



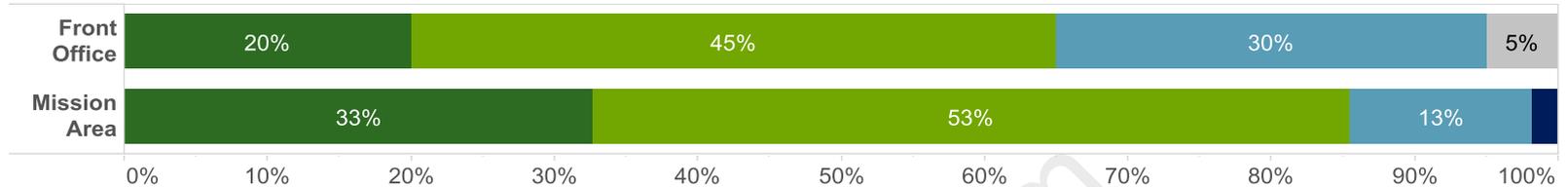
Areas sorted by dissatisfaction



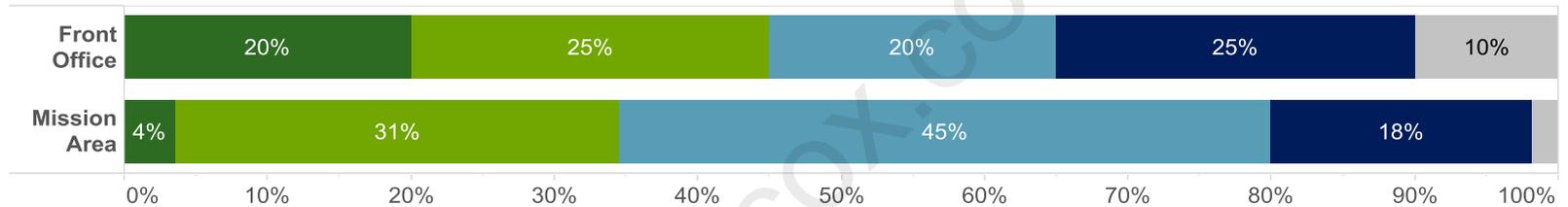
■ Agree
 ■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

Among staff, certain issues are featured as having both high and low satisfaction, suggesting there is a sizeable contingent of satisfied and dissatisfied personnel

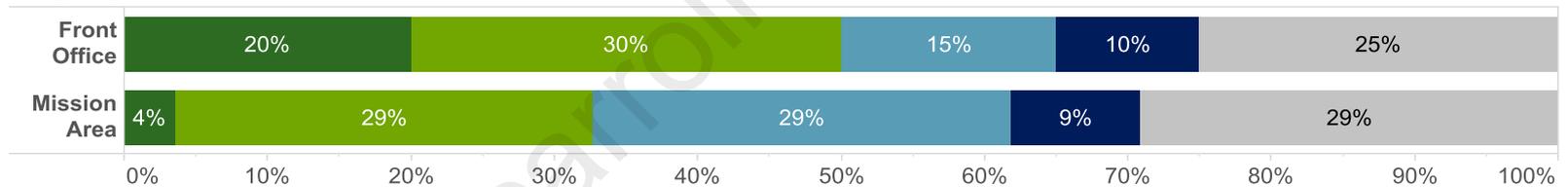
I clearly understand my roles and responsibilities and for what I am accountable



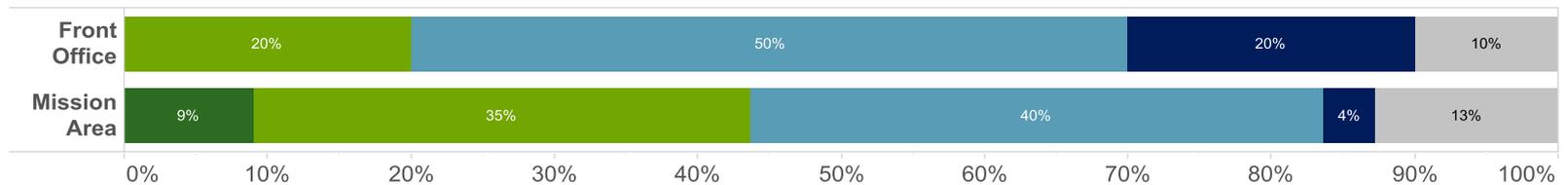
I am satisfied with the current performance evaluation system



Budgetary processes and decisions are conducted in a fair and transparent manner



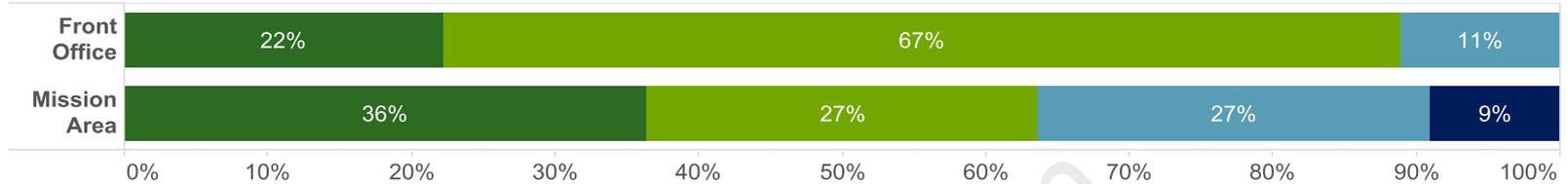
The chain of command for approvals and reporting is consistently adhered to at all levels



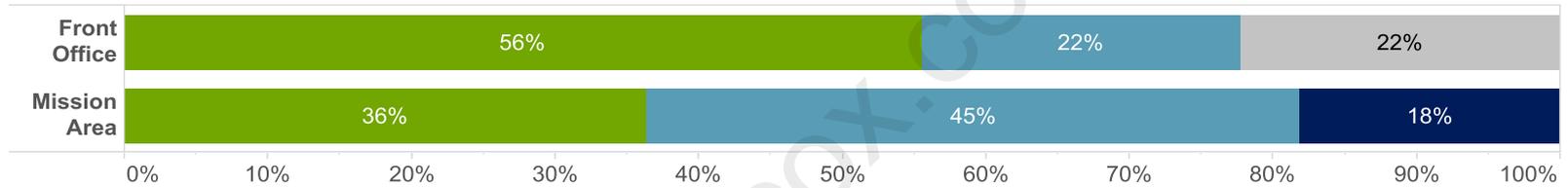
■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ N/A

Contractor opinions follow those of Federal staff, highlighting lack of transparency regarding budgetary processes and an inconsistent chain of command

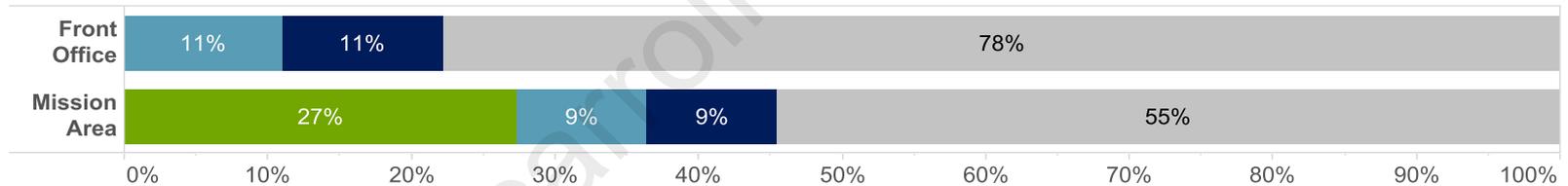
I clearly understand my roles and responsibilities and for what I am accountable



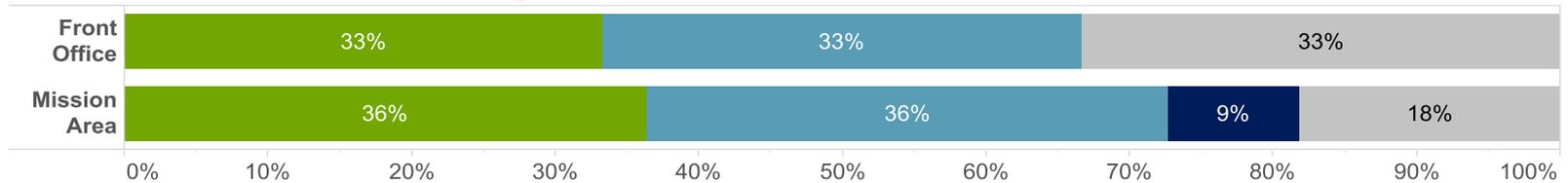
Policies and procedures within PIRO are uniform, fair and consistently applied



Budgetary processes and decisions are conducted in a fair and transparent manner



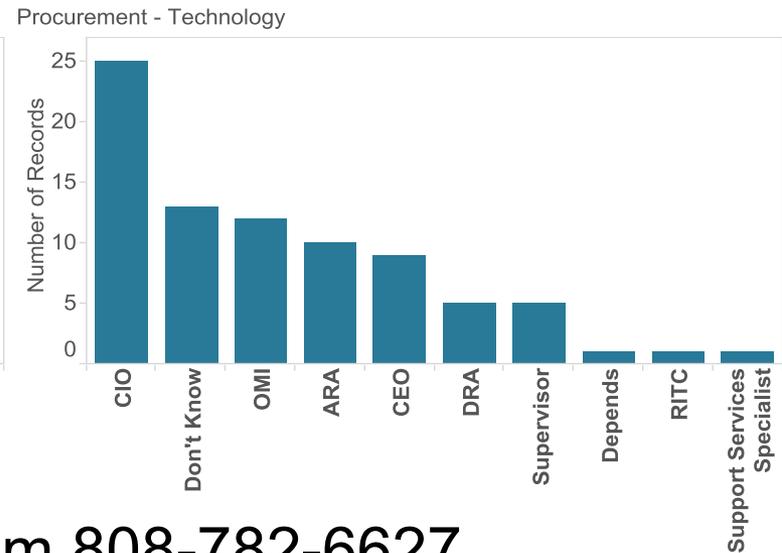
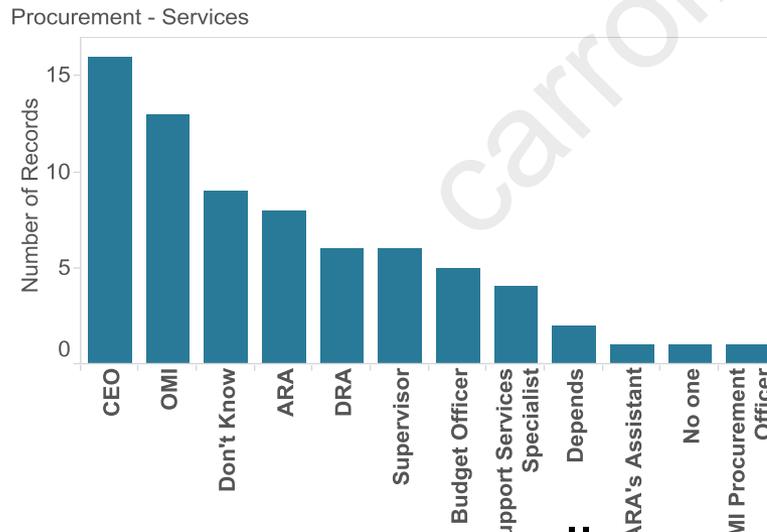
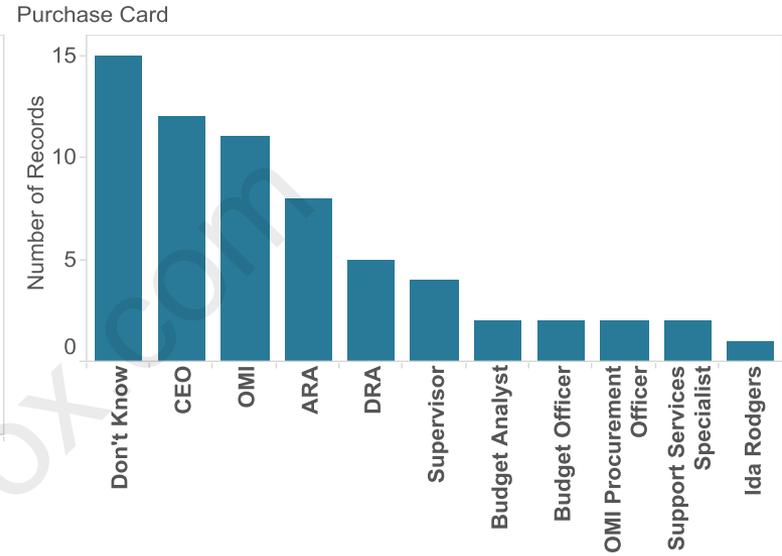
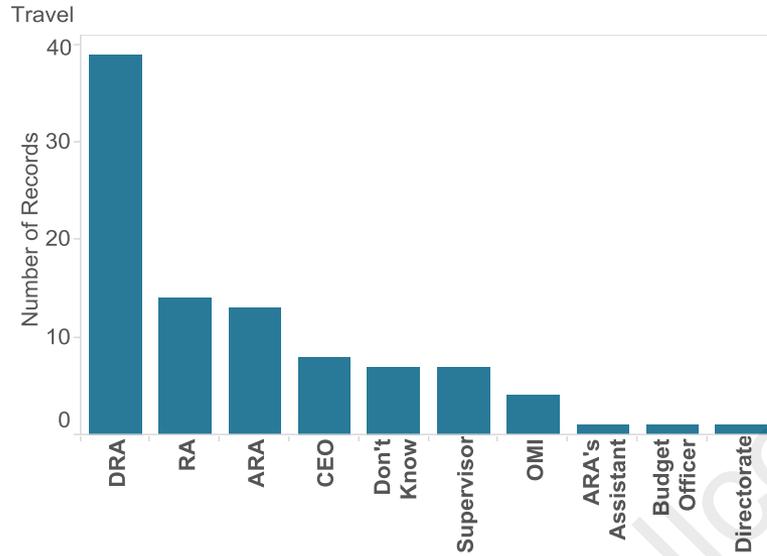
The chain of command for approvals and reporting is consistently adhered to at all levels



■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ N/A

Staff at PIRO are in disagreement about who approves travel, their purchase cards, and the procurement of services and technology

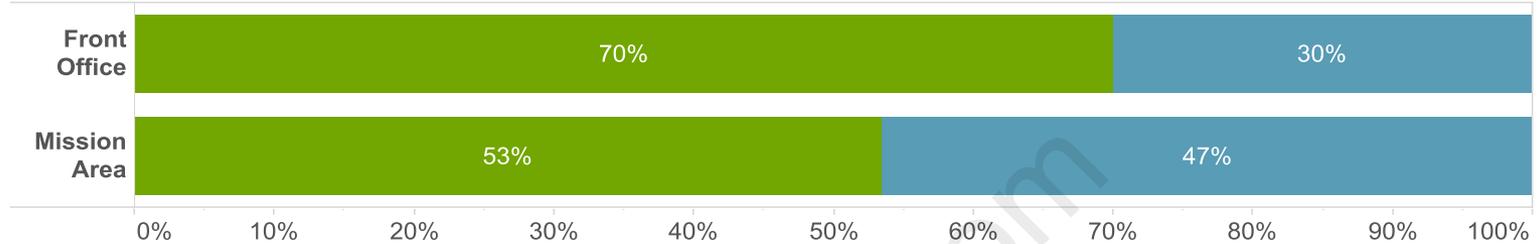
Who approves the following for you?



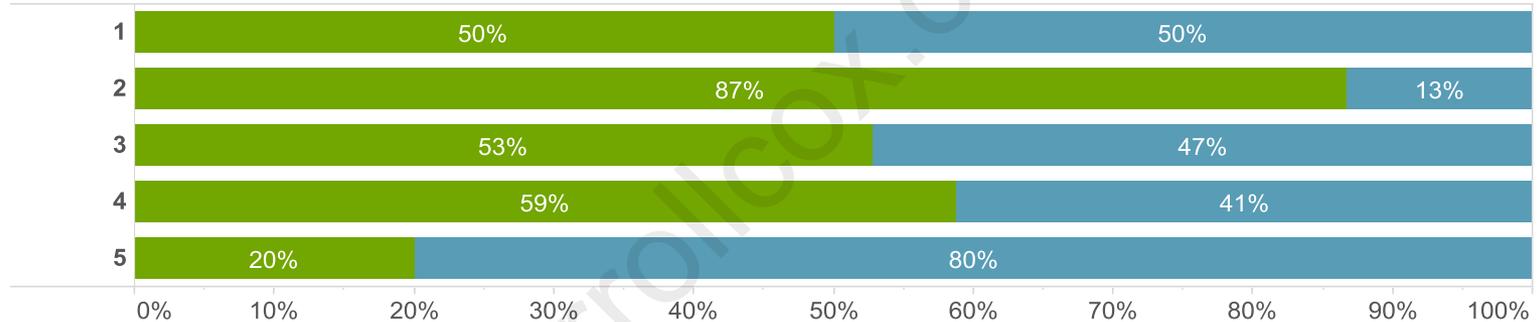
Many at PIRO would be inclined to take permanent opportunities elsewhere

If you had other opportunities for employment or transfer, would you be inclined to leave PIRO permanently?

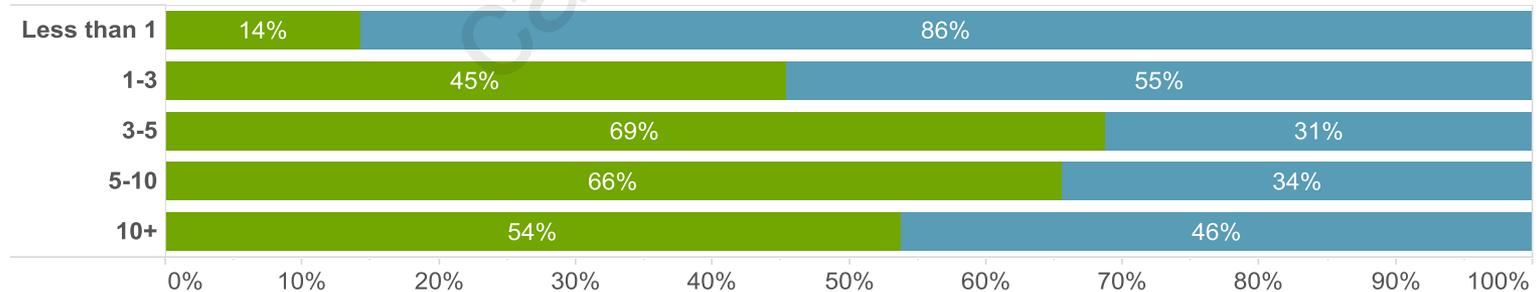
Front Office / Mission Area



Pay Band



Number of Years at PIRO



■ No ■ Yes